



Anglers applaud legislation to rein in executive power

Bills seek to curb unilateral power to designate marine monuments, no-go zones

WASHINGTON, DC (7-18-14) - Recreational anglers are applauding legislation introduced this week by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Ak) that will prevent any U.S. president from using the Antiquities Act to unilaterally designate large marine areas as no-go zones off limits to the public. Key components of the Improved National Monument Designation Process Act would require Congressional approval prior to the designation of any National Monument as well as approval by each state legislature within 100 miles of it. Congressman Steve Southerland (R-Fl) introduced similar legislation in the House, the [Marine Access and State Transparency \(MAST\) Act](#), in June.

“This is legislation that the recreational sector has been seeking since 2006, when the Antiquities Act was used to create a 139,797-square-mile National Marine Monument in Hawaii,” said Bill Bird, chairman of CCA’s National Government Relations Committee. “That was a stark wake-up call as to the sweeping, unilateral powers that the executive branch could employ to lock up vast swaths of the ocean and prohibit all activities within that area, even recreational uses. That is a considerable amount of power locked up in just one branch of our government.”

The Antiquities Act as currently written is sparse on process. The entire Act is roughly a page long and has four sections, one of which provides absolute discretion for the President to establish national monuments and, most recently, marine national monuments. There is currently no Congressional oversight and no opportunity for public comment or for review of the proposed monument designation. Over the past century, the Act has been used to proclaim 123 national monuments on land, but the creation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument in 2006 was the first time the law was used to create a marine protected area.

“This is an important piece of legislation and we are grateful to Sen. Murkowski and Rep. Southerland for taking the steps to interject some much-needed process into the designation of these areas,” said Bird. “With the executive branch showing increasing interest in establishing new marine monuments or substantially expanding existing boundaries, there is a critical need to allow stakeholders a greater voice in these decisions.”

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